

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

The Status of the Claims

21. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a virtual private network, comprising:

performing a number identifier operation at a service switching point of a first carrier based on ~~an originating~~ a destination number of a call without contacting a service control point;

when the number identifier operation indicates the ~~originating~~ destination number belongs to a predetermined set of ~~originating~~ destination numbers, routing the call from the service switching point of the first carrier over a private line to a switch of an intermediate carrier; and

when the number identifier operation indicates the ~~originating~~ destination number does not belong to the predetermined set of ~~originating~~ destination numbers, routing the call from the service switching point of the first carrier to the switch of the intermediate carrier over a line different from the private line.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising: routing the call from the switch of the intermediate carrier to a service switching point of a terminating carrier.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 22, wherein routing the call from the switch of the intermediate carrier to the service switching point of the terminating carrier further comprises, ~~when the originating number and a destination number of the call both belong to the set of originating numbers,~~ routing the virtual private network call over a private line.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, further comprising: receiving ~~the~~ an originating number at the service switching point of the first carrier.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising: sending a query from the switch of the intermediate carrier to a service control point.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24, further comprising: receiving a plain old telephone number translation of ~~a dialed~~ the destination number from the service control point.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising: receiving billing information.

28. (Currently Amended) A virtual private network, comprising:
a first private virtual network in a first LATA;
a second private virtual network in a second LATA; and

an intermediate carrier switch routing a call between the first private virtual network and the second private virtual network when a service control point determines the call requires routing between the first private virtual network and the second private virtual network, wherein, when a number identifier operation performed at a service switching point in the first LATA indicates ~~an originating~~ a destination number of the call belongs to a set of ~~originating~~ destination numbers, the first private virtual network is coupled to the intermediate carrier switch over a private line, and, when the number identifier operation indicates the ~~originating~~ destination number does not belong to the set of ~~originating~~ destination numbers, the first private virtual network is coupled to the intermediate carrier switch over a public line.

29. (Canceled)

30. (Original) The network of claim 28, wherein the second private virtual network is coupled to the intermediate carrier over a private line.

31. (Original) The network of claim 28 wherein the call is initiated by dialing four digits.